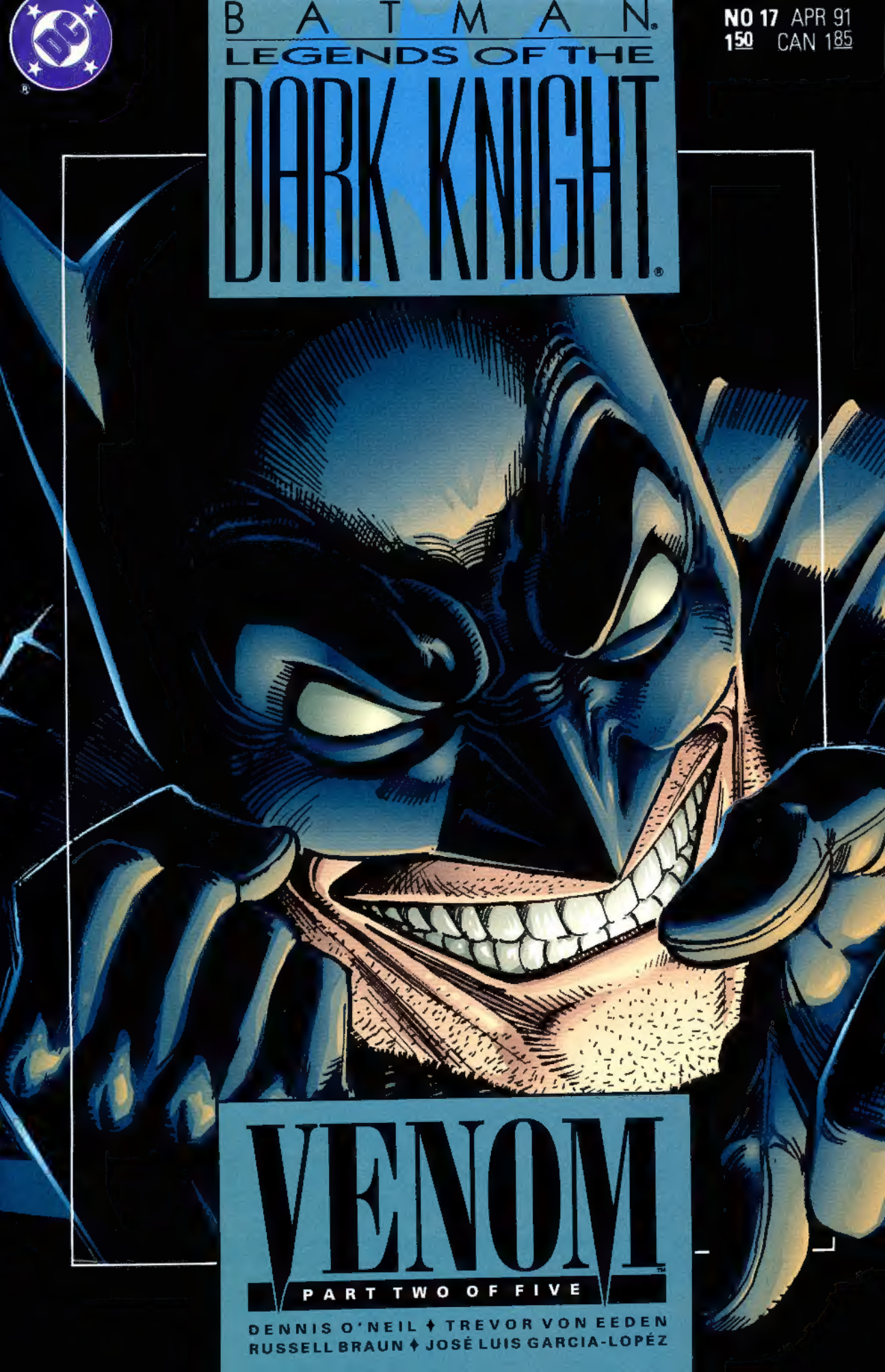
BATMAN
LEGENDS OF THE
DARK KNIGHT
NO 17 APR 91
1.50 CAN 1.85
VENOM
PART TWO OF FIVE
DENNIS O'NEIL ♦ TREVOR VON EEDEN
RUSSELL BRAUN ♦ JOSÉ LUIS GARCIA-LOPÉZ

VENOM: PART TWO

Story: Denny O'Neil • Layouts: Trevor Von Eeden •
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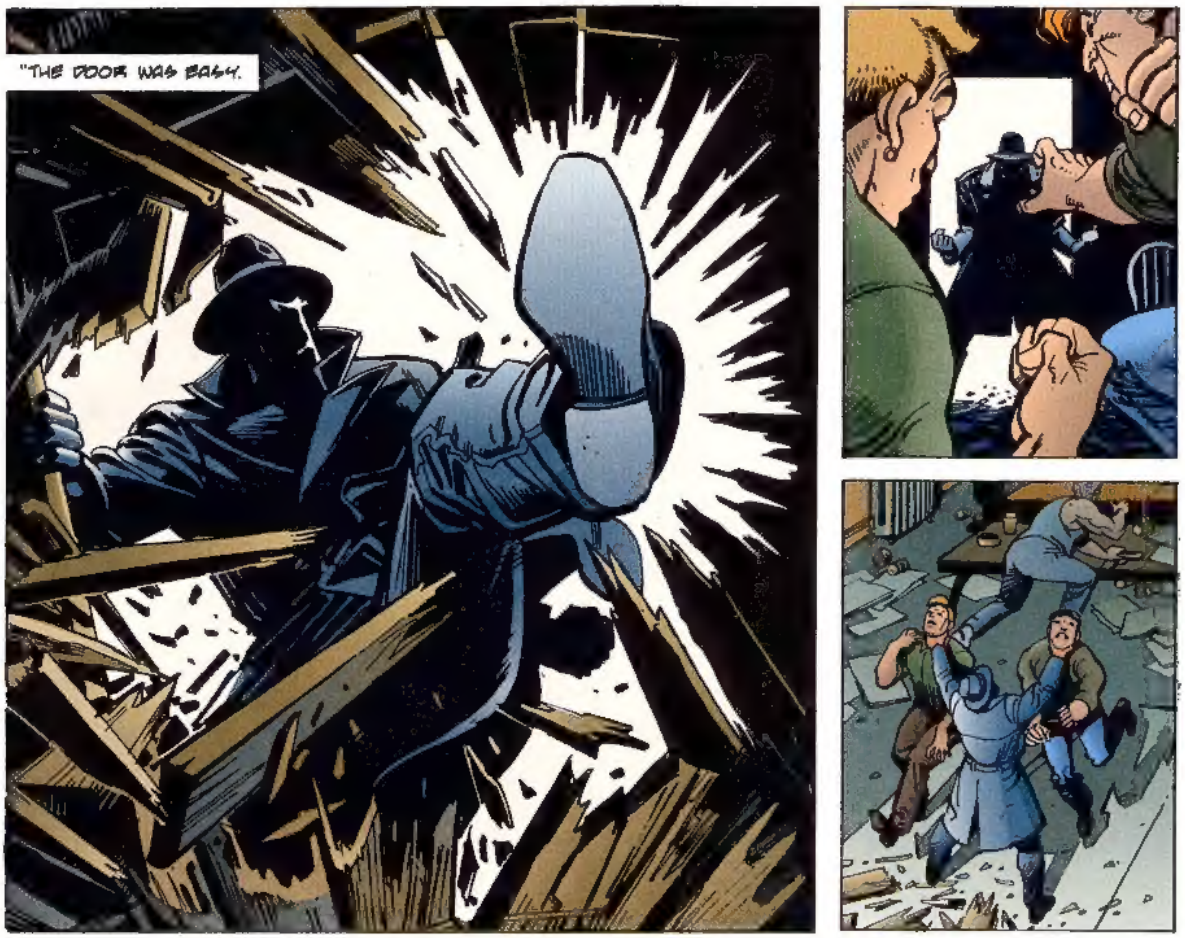
Willie Schubert: Letters • Steve Oliff: Colors • Dooley & Helfer: Editors


"THE DOOR WAS EASY.
"THE FIRST TWO PUNKS WEREN'T ANYTHING TO SWEAT ABOUT, EITHER.
"AND THE THIRD--HE WAS GOING TO SING ME A WHOLE OPERA. ONLY HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
"NOT YET HE DIDN'T."

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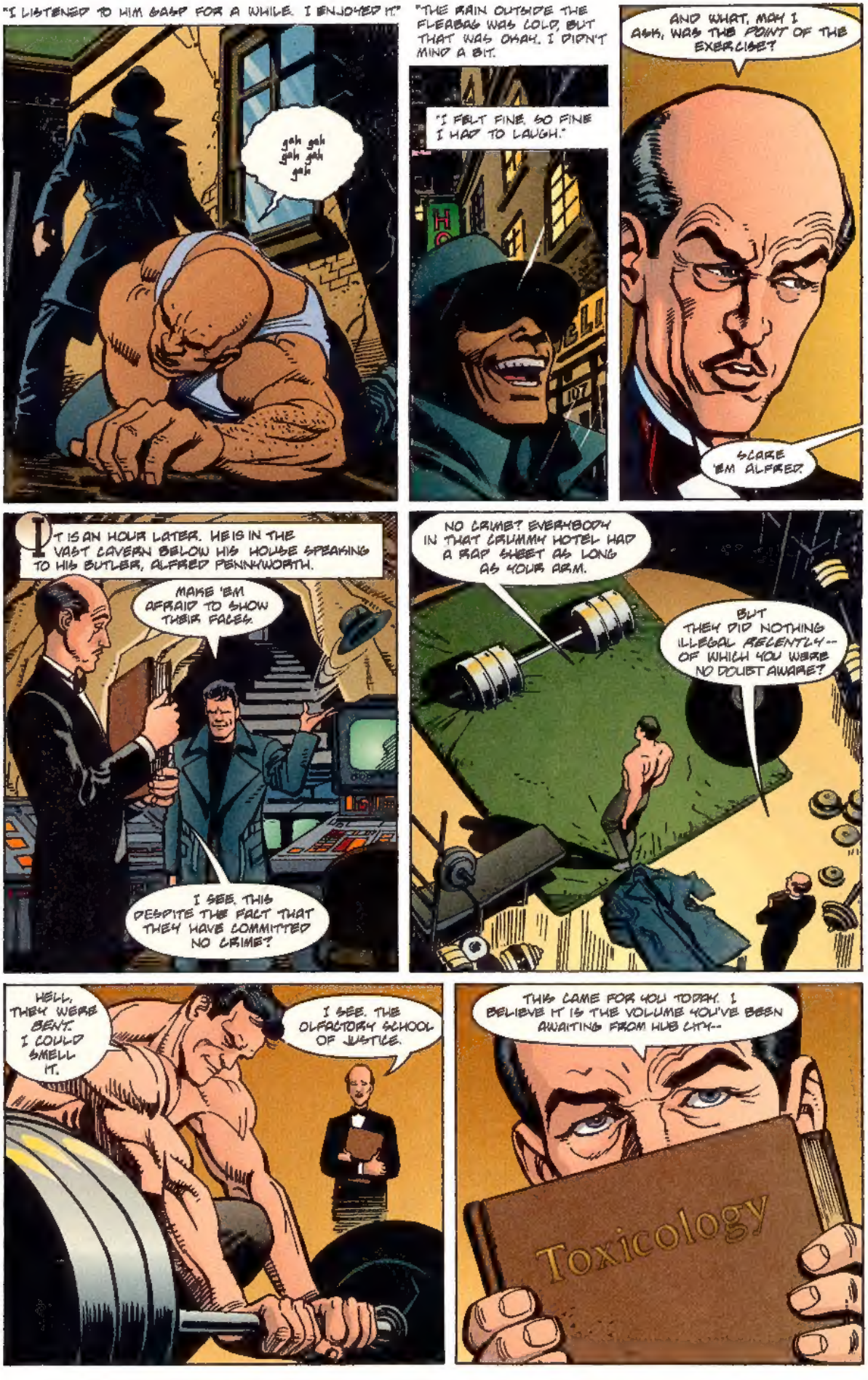
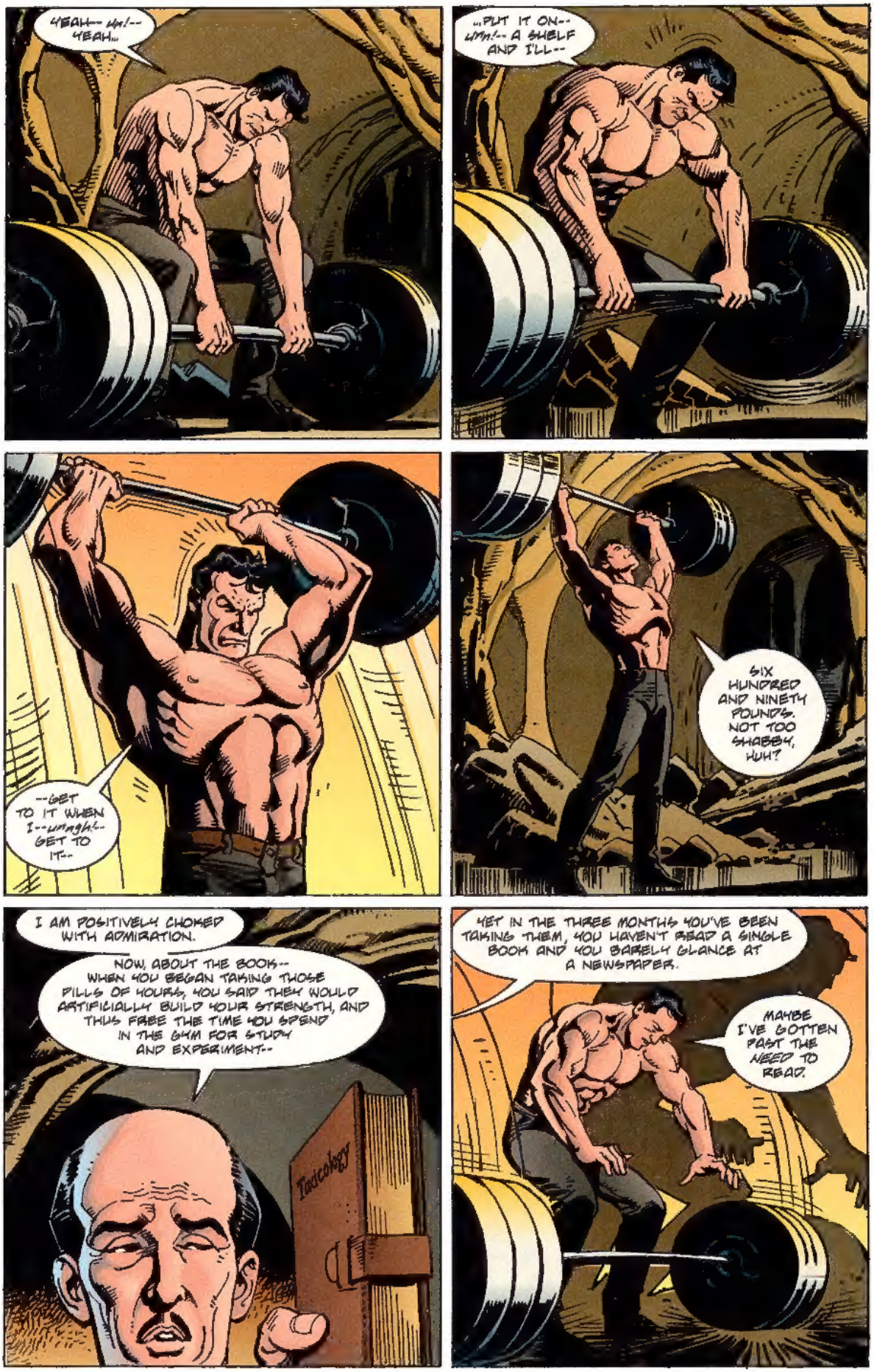
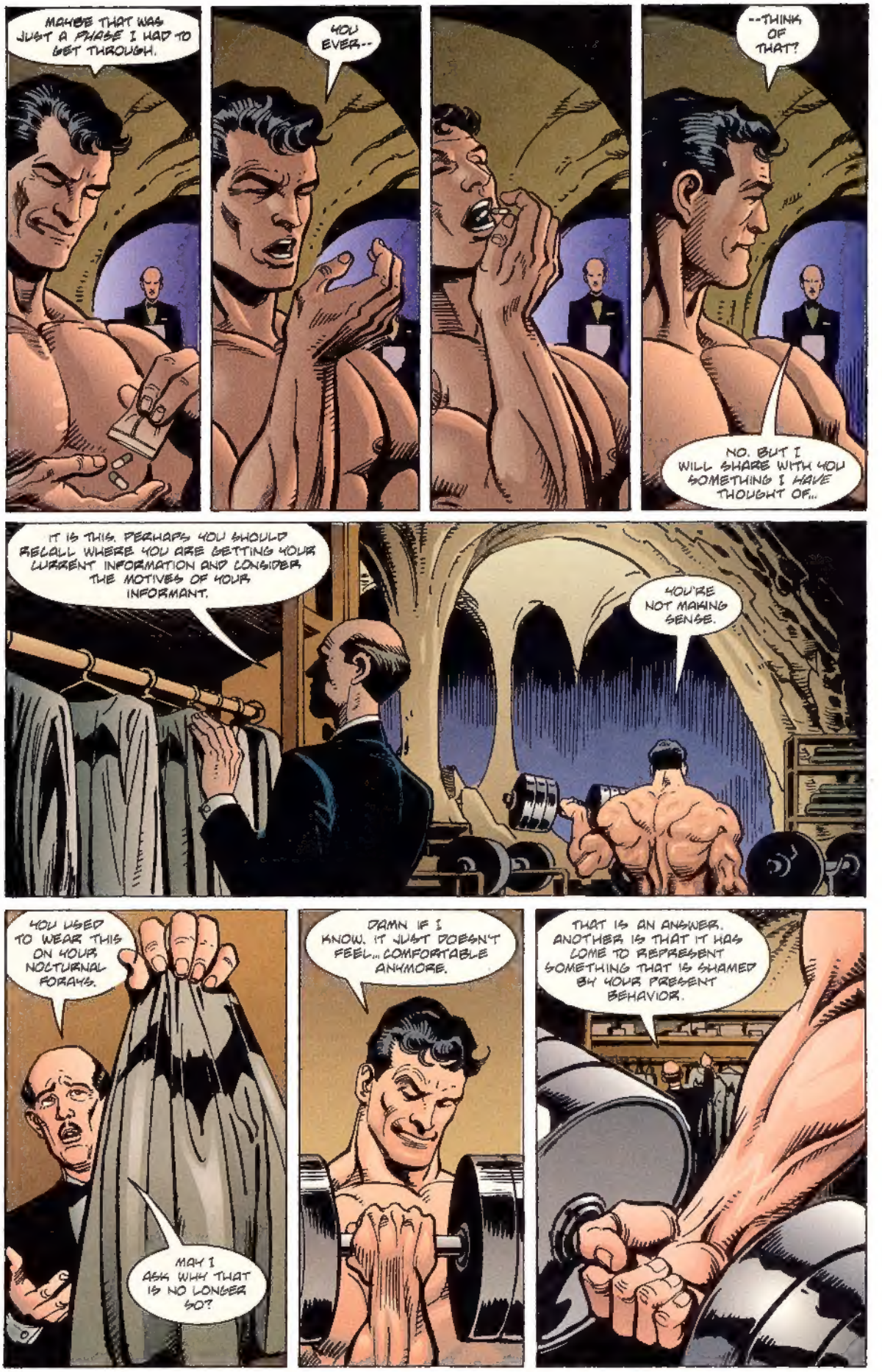
Jnx_Scanz_HoCsA !!!

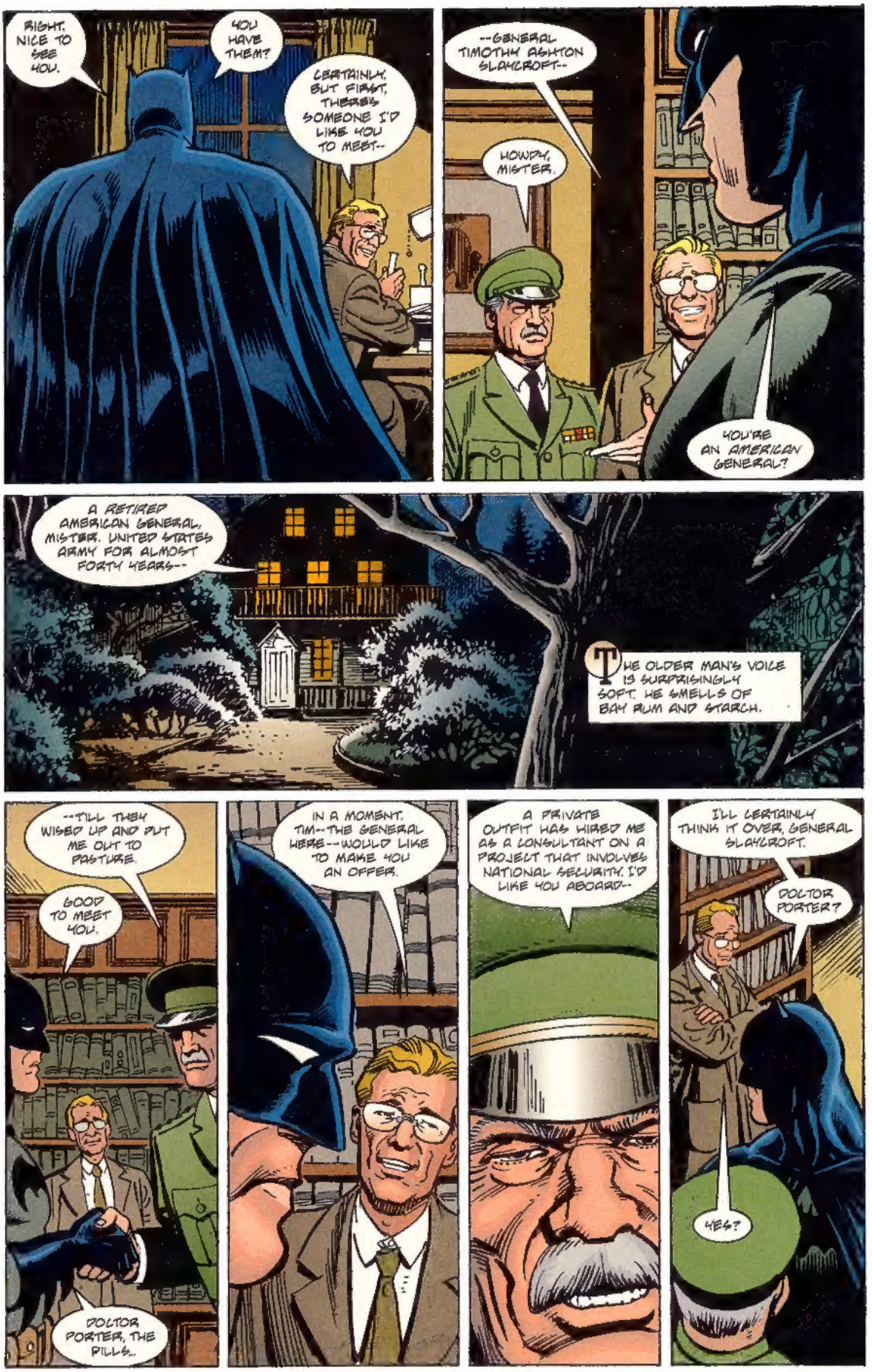
"I LET HIM SEE MY GRIN AND WATCHED THE FEAR SEEP INTO HIS EYES LIKE OIL SEEPING INTO A DIRTY POND. WHEN I SPOKE, MY VOICE WAS FULL OF BROKEN GLASS."
KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, PUNK? I'M TRYING TO DECIDE JUST WHICH OF YOUR HOLES TO CRAM THIS INTO.
MAYBE YOU GOT A PREFERENCE?
L-LOOK... WHOEVER YOU ARE--I'LL TELL YOU WHATEVER--
OH, YES. I KNOW YOU WILL.
THE MAN. THE CONNECTION. YOUR SUPPLIER. THE SLUM THAT SELLS YOU DRUGS.
WILLIE... BIG GUY, WHO HANGS AT SLICK'S CAR SERVICE...
"I'D PUT WILLIE IN THE HOSPITAL SIX HOURS EARLIER. IT'D BEEN FUN.
"I HATE JUNKIES."


"I LISTENED TO HIM GASP FOR A WHILE. I ENJOYED IT."
gah gah gah gah gah
"THE RAIN OUTSIDE THE FLEABAG WAS COLD, BUT THAT WAS OKAY. I DIDN'T MIND A BIT.
"I FELT FINE. SO FINE I HAD TO LAUGH."
AND WHAT, MAY I ASK, WAS THE POINT OF THE EXERCISE?
SCARE 'EM ALFRED.
IT IS AN HOUR LATER. HE IS IN THE VAST CAVERN BELOW HIS HOUSE SPEAKING TO HIS BUTLER, ALFRED PENNYWORTH.
MAKE 'EM AFRAID TO SHOW THEIR FACES.
I SEE. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE COMMITTED NO CRIME?
NO CRIME? EVERYBODY IN THAT CRUMMY HOTEL HAD A RAP SHEET AS LONG AS YOUR ARM.
BUT THEY DID NOTHING ILLEGAL RECENTLY-- OF WHICH YOU WERE NO DOUBT AWARE?
HELL, THEY WERE BENT. I COULD SMELL IT.
I SEE. THE OLFACTORY SCHOOL OF JUSTICE.
THIS CAME FOR YOU TODAY. I BELIEVE IT IS THE VOLUME YOU'VE BEEN AWAITING FROM HUB CITY--
Toxicology


YEAH-- UH!-- YEAH...
...PUT IT ON-- UMM!-- A SHELF AND I'LL--
--GET TO IT WHEN I--UMMGH!-- GET TO IT--
SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY POUNDS. NOT TOO SHABBY, HUH?
I AM POSITIVELY CHOKED WITH ADMIRATION.
NOW, ABOUT THE BOOK-- WHEN YOU BEGAN TAKING THOSE PILLS OF YOURS, YOU SAID THEY WOULD ARTIFICIALLY BUILD YOUR STRENGTH, AND THUS FREE THE TIME YOU SPEND IN THE GYM FOR STUDY AND EXPERIMENT--
Toxicology
YET IN THE THREE MONTHS YOU'VE BEEN TAKING THEM, YOU HAVEN'T READ A SINGLE BOOK AND YOU BARELY GLANCE AT A NEWSPAPER.
MAYBE I'VE GOTTEN PAST THE NEED TO READ.


MAYBE THAT WAS JUST A PHASE I HAD TO GET THROUGH.
YOU EVER--
--THINK OF THAT?
NO. BUT I WILL SHARE WITH YOU SOMETHING I HAVE THOUGHT OF..
IT IS THIS. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD RECALL WHERE YOU ARE GETTING YOUR CURRENT INFORMATION AND CONSIDER THE MOTIVES OF YOUR INFORMANT.
YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE.
YOU USED TO WEAR THIS ON YOUR NOCTURNAL FORAYS.
MAY I ASK WHY THAT IS NO LONGER SO?
DAMN IF I KNOW. IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL... COMFORTABLE ANYMORE.
THAT IS AN ANSWER. ANOTHER IS THAT IT HAS COME TO REPRESENT SOMETHING THAT IS SHAMED BY YOUR PRESENT BEHAVIOR.

I'VE GOT NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. GET THAT LOUD AND CLEAR-- NOTHING!
AND IF YOU THINK I DO...MAYBE YOU'RE ONE OF THEM!
ONE OF WHOM?
THE WEAKLINGS. THE SNIVELERS WHO'VE LET THE CITY BECOME A SEWER BECAUSE THEY'RE AFRAID TO DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AWAY FROM YOU.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD KEEP WALKING
THAT IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA.
"SHAMED" HE SAID.
I'LL SHOW HIM.
OF COURSE, MAYBE I WAS A LITTLE ROUGH ON HIM...
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
DOCTOR RANDOLPH PORTER IS SMOOTH AND AVUNCULAR, AS ALWAYS.


RIGHT. NICE TO SEE YOU.
YOU HAVE THEM?
CERTAINLY. BUT FIRST, THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET--
--GENERAL TIMOTHY ASHTON SLAYCROFT--
HOWDY, MISTER.
YOU'RE AN AMERICAN GENERAL?
A RETIRED AMERICAN GENERAL, MISTER. UNITED STATES ARMY FOR ALMOST FORTY YEARS--
THE OLDER MAN'S VOICE IS SURPRISINGLY SOFT. HE SMELLS OF BAY RUM AND STARCH.
--TILL THEY WISED UP AND PUT ME OUT TO PASTURE.
GOOD TO MEET YOU.
DOCTOR PORTER, THE PILLS..
IN A MOMENT, TIM--THE GENERAL HERE--WOULD LIKE TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER.
A PRIVATE OUTFIT HAS HIRED ME AS A CONSULTANT ON A PROJECT THAT INVOLVES NATIONAL SECURITY. I'D LIKE YOU ABOARD--
I'LL CERTAINLY THINK IT OVER, GENERAL SLAYCROFT.
DOCTOR PORTER?
YES?

OH, THESE! YOU WANT THESE!

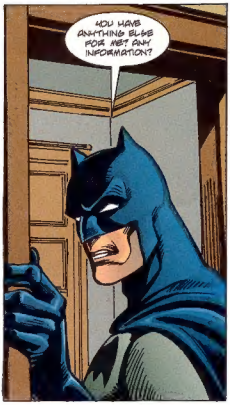
THANK YOU.

UH... DOCTOR PORTER?

YES?
THERE ARE ONLY FOUR.

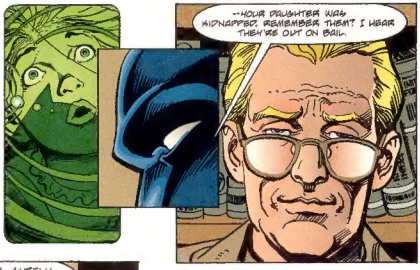
I'VE BEEN BUSY-- DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO MAKE UP ANY MORE. THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM IS IT?
NO... OF COURSE NOT.

CAN YOU RETURN LATER IN THE WEEK?
SURE. NO SWEAT.


YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE FOR ME? ANY INFORMATION?

FRAID NOT. YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND YOUR OWN BAD GUYS.

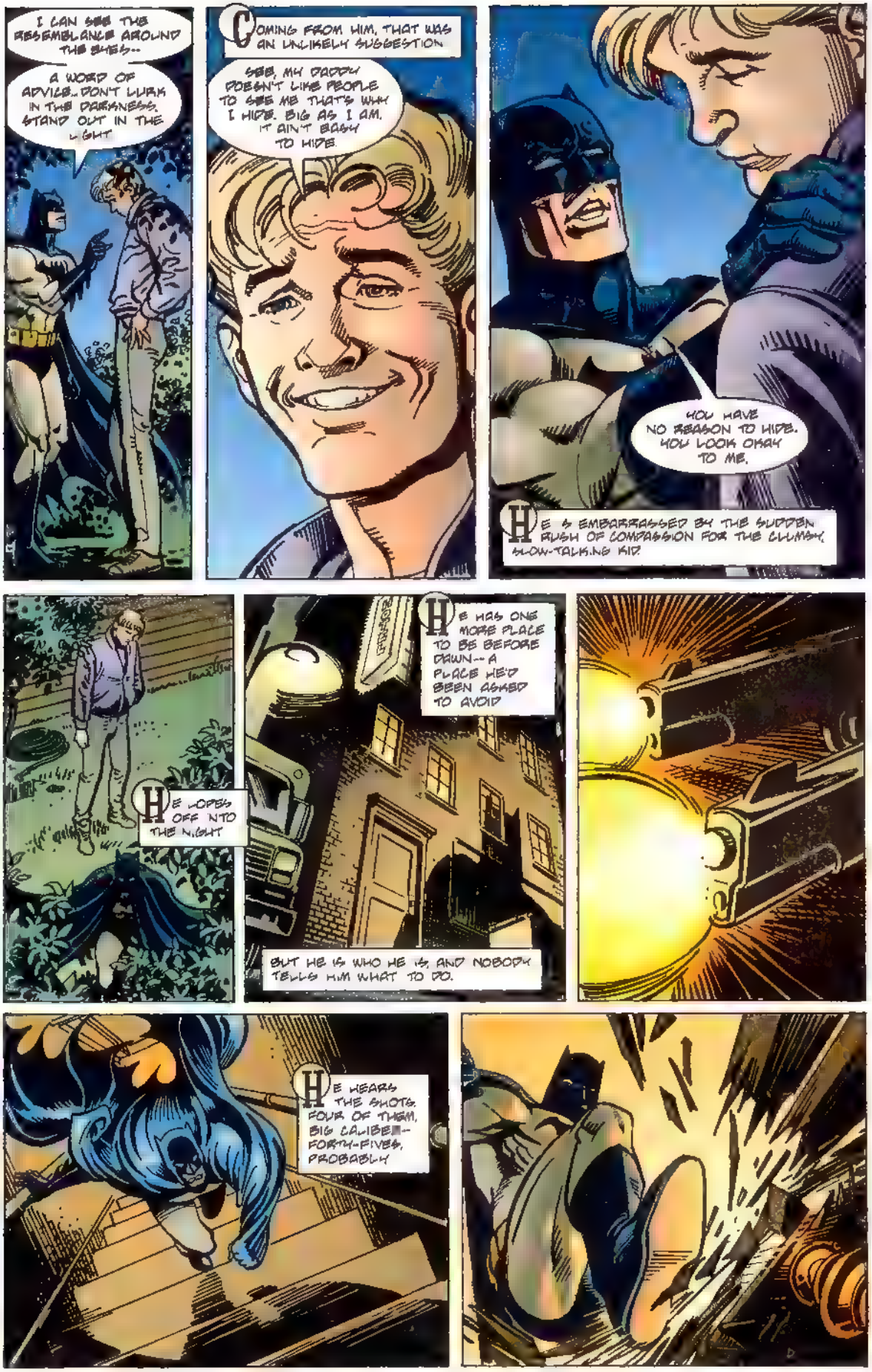
SURE, BABY. I'LL GO CHECK ON PATSY AND BASH-- THE PUNKS WHO TRIED TO RIP YOU OFF THE NIGHT--

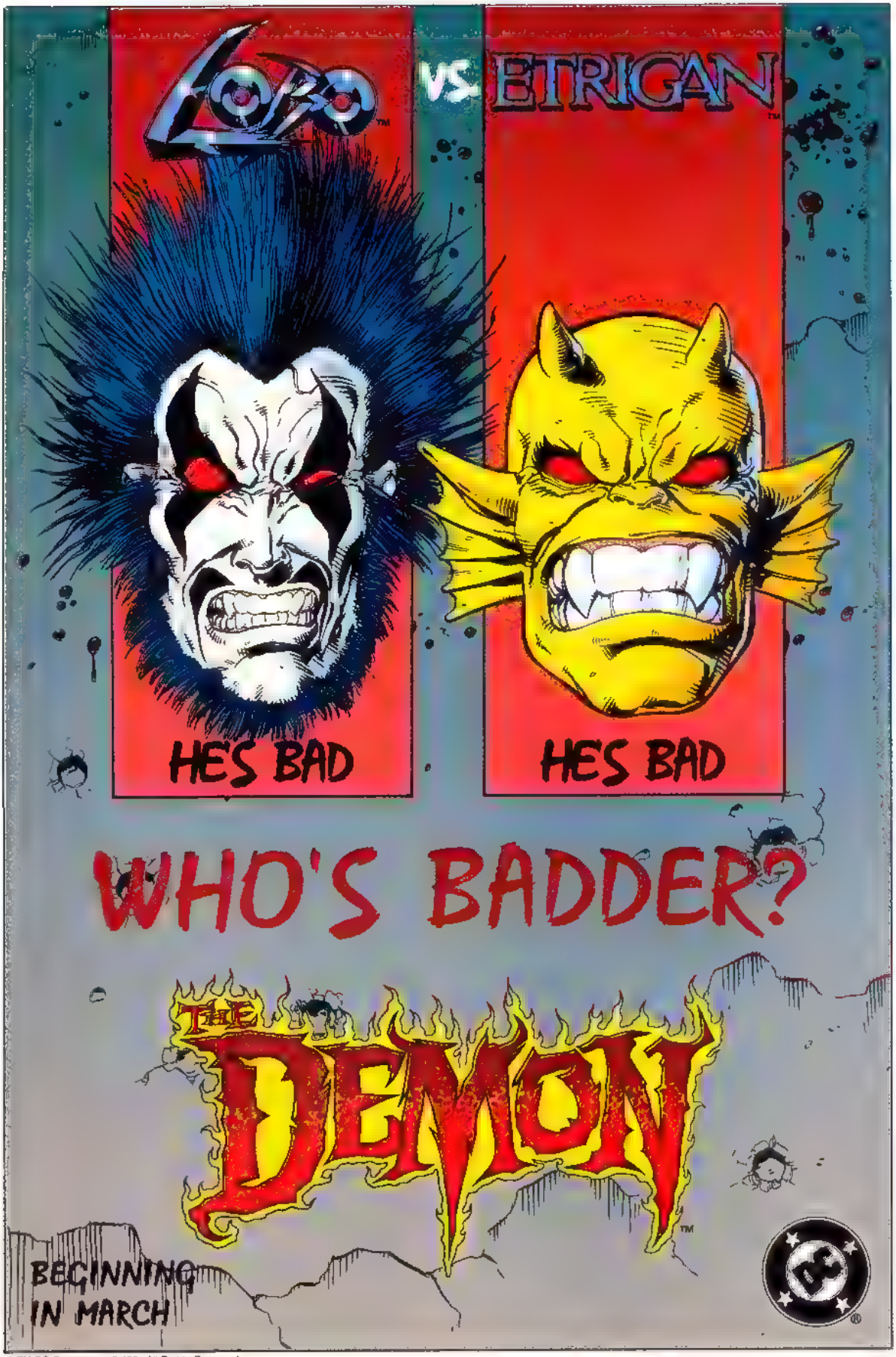

--YOUR DAUGHTER WAS KIDNAPPED, REMEMBER THEM? I HEAR THEY'RE OUT ON BAIL.

NOT A GOOD IDEA, GUMBLY. THERE ARE OTHER CRIMINALS YOU CAN HARASS.
OKAY, SURE.

WELL?
I'M PLEASED WERE IN THE BALLPARK. YOU NOTICE HOW DULL HE SEEMED?
AND HOW ANXIOUS HE WAS TO GET THE LAPPLE?
ANOTHER WEEK AND HE'S OURS.

MEANWHILE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM TWO PROBLEMS--PATSY AND BREW IF HE FINDS OUT THE INFORMATION I'VE BEEN FEEDING HIM COMES FROM THEM..
THAT YOU'VE BEEN USING HIM TO WIPE OUT THEIR COMPETITION--
--AND YOU'VE BEEN DOING BUSINESS WITH THEM..
EXACTLY NOW THAT YOU ARE FINANCING MY EXPERIMENTS, MY COLLEAGUES PATSY AND BREW ARE SUPERFLUOUS
THERE'S AN OLD MILITARY PRINCIPLE MISTER. NEVER CARRY DEAD WEIGHT
I'LL TAKE CARE OF T
OUTSIDE HE HEARS SOMETHING THAT SHIFTS AND BREATHES, AND HE FEELS THE FAMILIAR ELECTRIC TINGLE--
OKAY, PUNK YOU GOT ABOUT THREE SECONDS TO TELL ME WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU WANT BEFORE I RIP YOUR HEAD OFF
I I'M TIMMY! TIMMY SLAYCROFT! AND I'M WAITIN FOR MY DADDY!
YOUR FATHER IS GENERAL SLAYCROFT?
GENERAL TIMOTHY SLAYCROFT SAME AS MY NAME. SEE I'M A JUNIOR


I CAN SEE THE RESEMBLANCE AROUND THE EYES--
A WORD OF ADVICE.. DON'T LURK IN THE DARKNESS. STAND OUT IN THE LIGHT
COMING FROM HIM, THAT WAS AN UNLIKELY SUGGESTION
SEE, MY DADDY DOESN'T LIKE PEOPLE TO SEE ME THAT'S WHY I HIDE. BIG AS I AM, IT AIN'T EASY TO HIDE.
YOU HAVE NO REASON TO HIDE. YOU LOOK OKAY TO ME.
HE'S EMBARRASSED BY THE SUDDEN RUSH OF COMPASSION FOR THE CLUMSY, SLOW-TALKING KID
HE LOPES OFF INTO THE NIGHT
HE HAS ONE MORE PLACE TO BE BEFORE DAWN-- A PLACE HE'D BEEN ASKED TO AVOID
BUT HE IS WHO HE IS, AND NOBODY TELLS HIM WHAT TO DO.
HE HEARS THE SHOTS. FOUR OF THEM, BIG CALIBER-- FORTY-FIVES, PROBABLY



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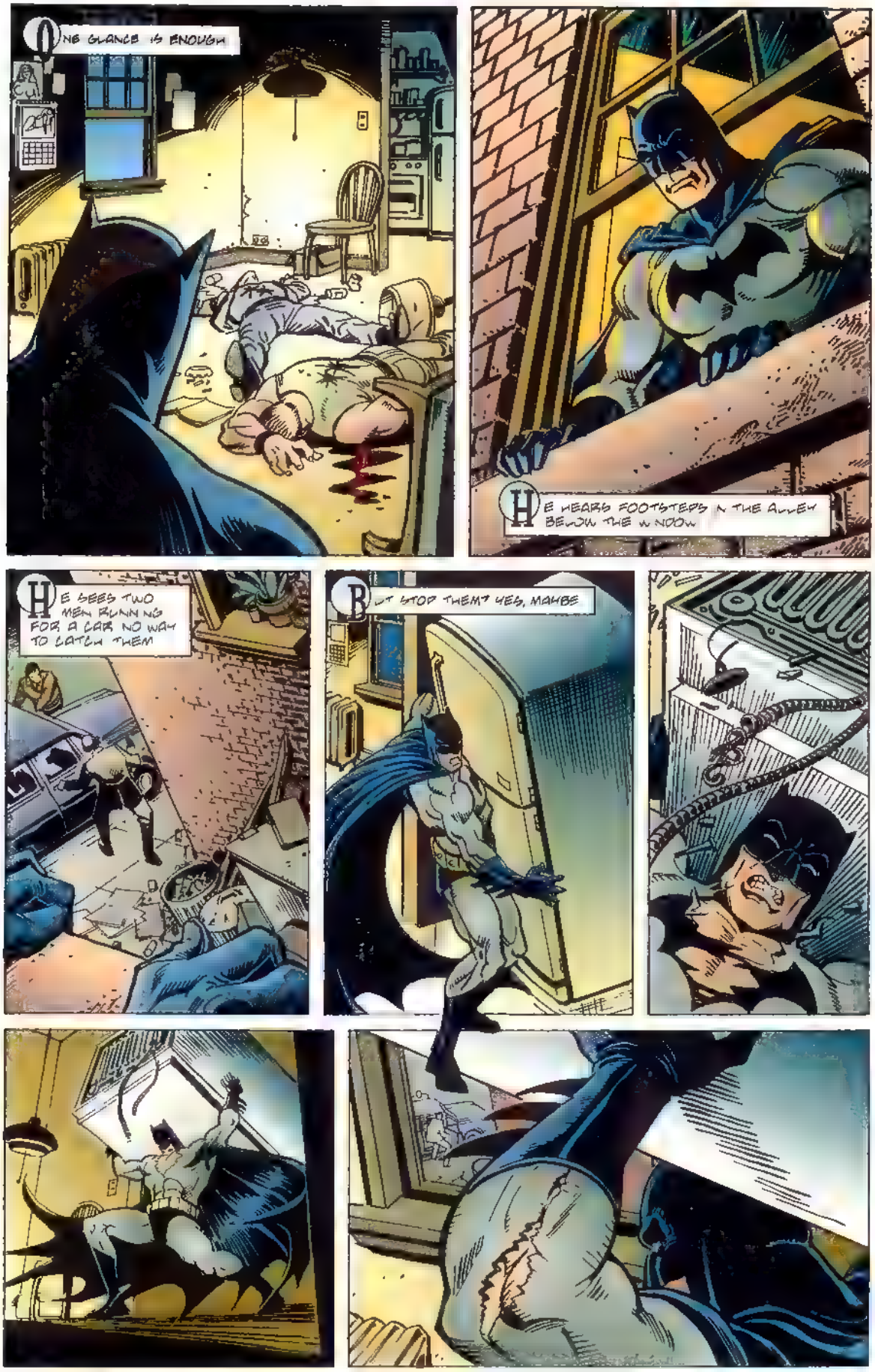
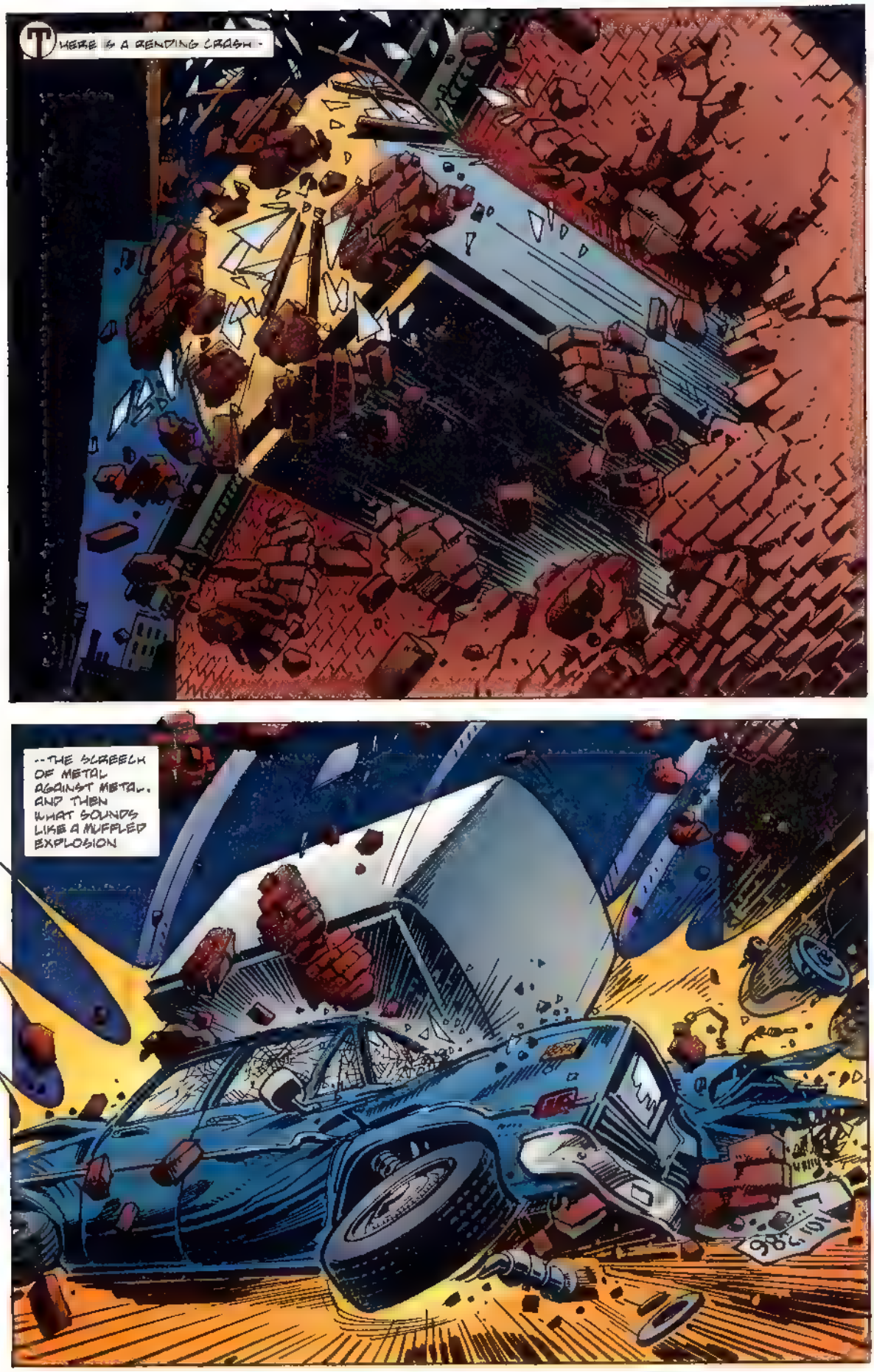
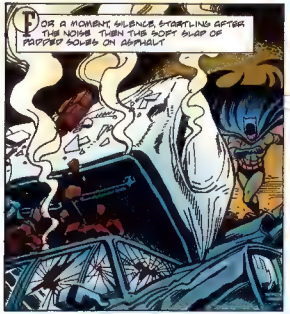
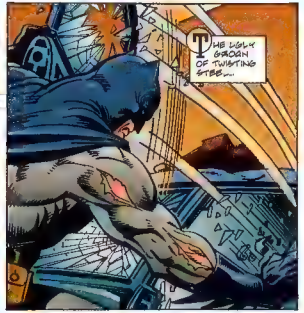

ONE GLANCE IS ENOUGH
HE HEARS FOOTSTEPS IN THE ALLEY BELOW THE WINDOW
HE SEES TWO MEN RUNNING FOR A CAR. NO WAY TO CATCH THEM
BUT STOP THEM? YES, MAYBE


THERE IS A RENDING CRASH -
--THE SCREECH OF METAL AGAINST METAL. AND THEN WHAT SOUNDS LIKE A MUFFLED EXPLOSION


FOR A MOMENT, SILENCE, STARTLING AFTER THE NOISE. THEN THE SOFT SLAP OF PADDED SOLES ON ASPHALT


THE UGLY CRUNCH OF TWISTING STEEL...

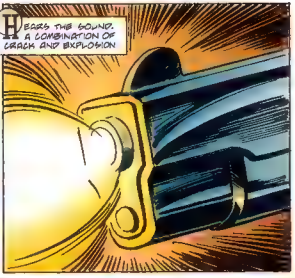
AND IS THAT A EVEN LOUDER--
HOW DO THIS DIRTBAGS UPSTAIRS. YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME WH--BUT NOT FIGHT AWAY!
FIGHT--

--I'M GONNA HURT YOU A WHILE

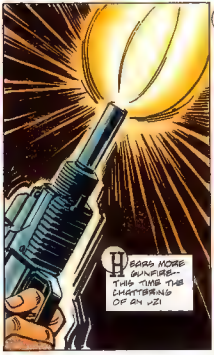
I'M GONNA BREAK A FEW BONES.
LISTEN TO HOW WHIMPER.

MASTER... WATCH OUT!

HE FEELS THE RIPPLE OF LIGHT ON THE BLUE-STEEL BARREL


HEARS THE SOUND. A COMBINATION OF CRACK AND EXPLOSION

FEELS THE MAN IN HIS HANDS JERK AS HE STOPS THE SLUG


HEARS MORE GUNFIRE— THIS TIME THE CHATTERING OF AN UZI

THE KILLER'S BODY STOPS VIOLENTLY AS HE DIES

AN ENGINE ROARS AND A DARK SEDAN BURSTS FROM THE SHADOWS, TIRES SCREECHING--
--AND VANISHES INTO THE GOTHAM NIGHT
SENSES SHE'S SOMEWHERE NOT FAR AWAY
HE RUNS FOR HOME
HE DOES NOT WANT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS. HE CAN'T--HE IS MUDDLED, UNSURE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED
POLICE CAPTAIN JAMES GORDON IS, AS ALWAYS, AT HIS DESK LONG AFTER THE CITY HAS DARKENED
--REPRINTED THE STUFF, BUT--THE DELEAVEY CAPER--THE FEDS DON'T SHOW ANY CRIMINAL RECORDS, ANY MORE'N WE DO.
SEND THE PRINTS TO THE MULTI-TRAK RECORDS CENTER IN ST. LOUIS SEE IF THEY TURN UP ANYTHING
AND TELL THE LAB TO HURRY UP WITH THE CAR
AND I WANT THAT BALLISTICS REPORT NOW!

I'D BE INTERESTED IN THAT REPORT, TOO.
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D SHOW UP--IF YOU'D SHOW UP. IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS.
BEEN ON VACATION?
YOU SHOULDN'T SMOKE. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT NICOTINE IS AS ADDICTIVE AS HEROIN.
YEAH, AND IT CAUSES EMPHYSEMA AND HEART DISEASE. ALSO MAKES YOU SMELL LOUSY. WANT TO TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW?
DEFENSIVE, WHAT DON'T YOU KNOW?
I DON'T KNOW WHO'S BEEN GOING AROUND BUSTING HEADS. SOME GUY IN A HAT AND TRENCH COAT. TELL ME ABOUT THAT.
NO COMMENT.
YOU LOOK DIFFERENT. BIGGER. BEEFIER.
I SWITCHED BREAKFAST CEREALS. I'M EATING THE KIND THAT'S FORTIFIED WITH VITAMINS AND MINERALS.
I STILL LIKE THE GRUMPY GUISE.
MM. HOW'S THE FAMILY? BARBARA AND THE KIDS?

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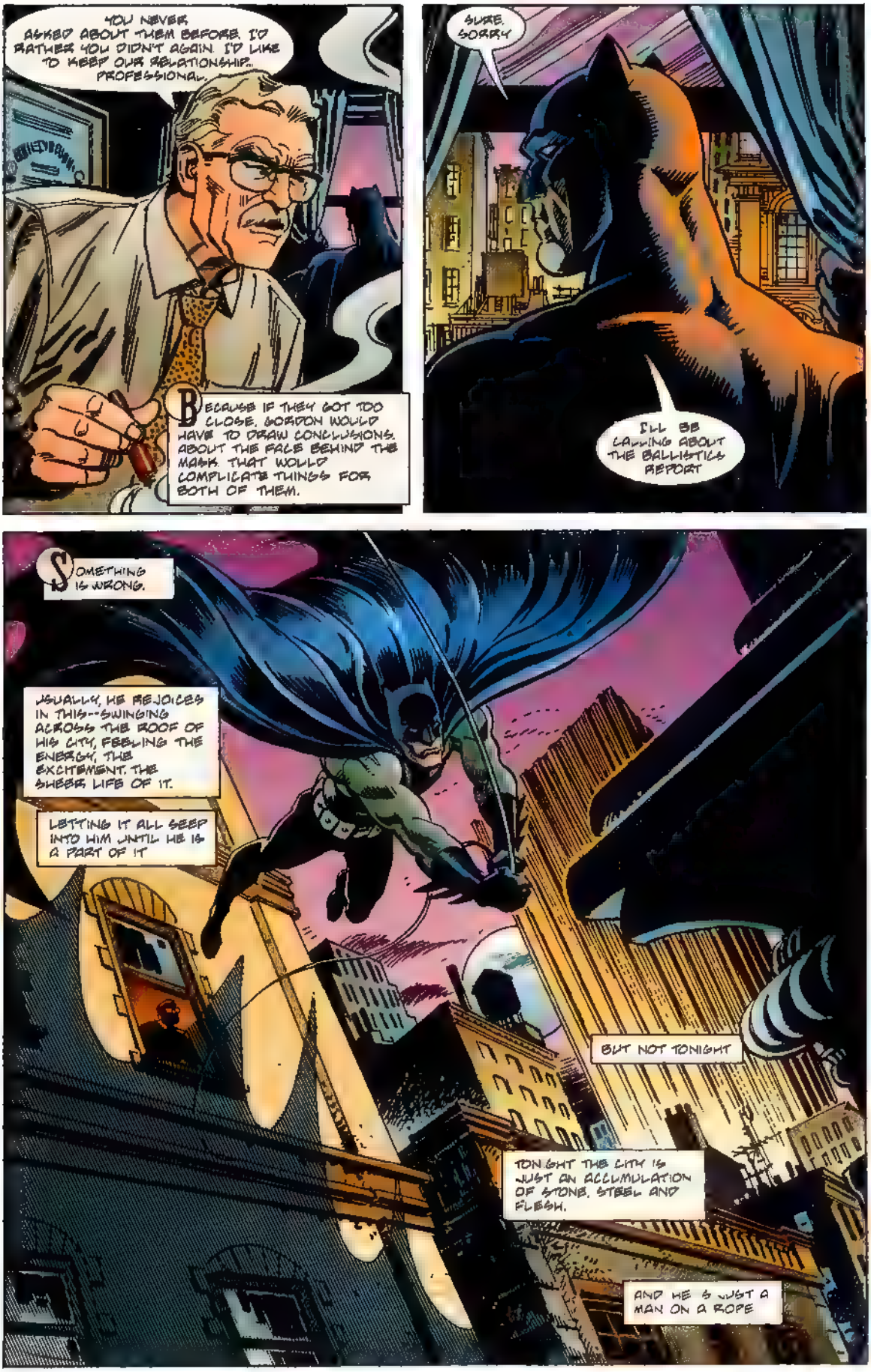
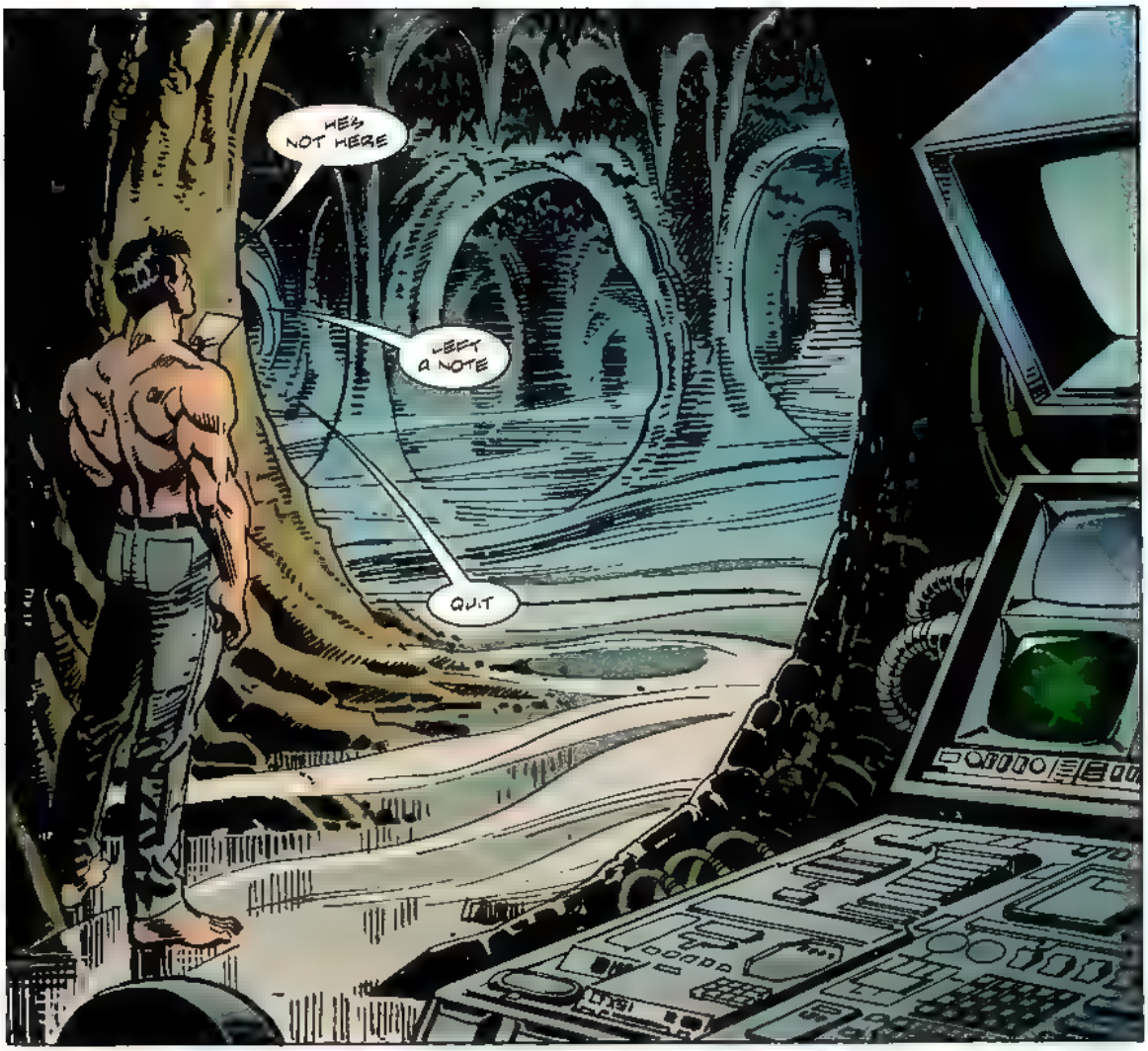
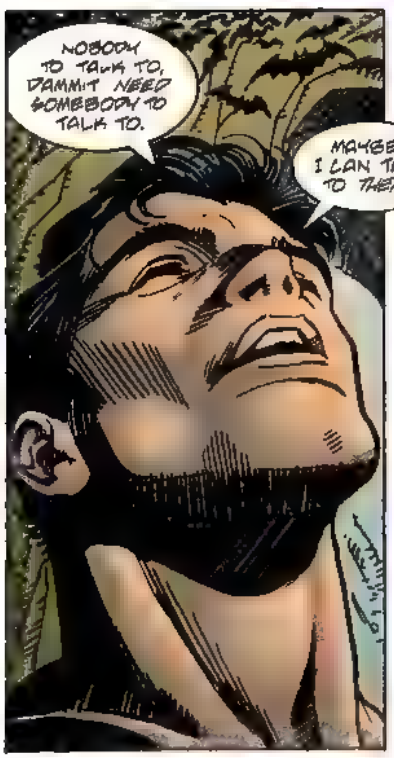
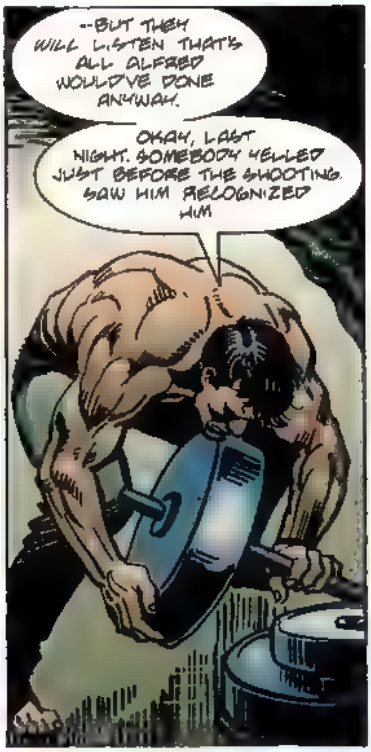

YOU NEVER ASKED ABOUT THEM BEFORE. I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T AGAIN. I'D LIKE TO KEEP OUR RELATIONSHIP... PROFESSIONAL.
BECAUSE IF THEY GOT TOO CLOSE, GORDON WOULD HAVE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS. ABOUT THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK. THAT WOULD COMPLICATE THINGS FOR BOTH OF THEM.
SURE. SORRY
I'LL BE CALLING ABOUT THE BALLISTICS REPORT
SOMETHING IS WRONG.
USUALLY, HE REJOICES IN THIS--SWINGING ACROSS THE ROOF OF HIS CITY, FEELING THE ENERGY, THE EXCITEMENT. THE SHEER LIFE OF IT.
LETTING IT ALL SEEP INTO HIM UNTIL HE IS A PART OF IT
BUT NOT TONIGHT
TONIGHT THE CITY IS JUST AN ACCUMULATION OF STONE, STEEL AND FLESH.
AND HE'S JUST A MAN ON A ROPE

DOCTOR RANDOLPH PORTER AND GENERAL TIMOTHY SLAYCROFT AREN'T PARTICULARLY EARLY RISERS, SO THEY DON'T MEET UNTIL ALMOST NOON--
--FRIEND IN ST. LOUIS FIELDED AN INQUIRY FROM A COP NAMED GORDON.
MY CONTACTS DOWNTOWN TELL ME GORDON WON'T QUIT AND CAN'T BE BOUGHT
THAT'S BAD?
EXTREMELY. EVENTUALLY HE'LL LEARN THAT THE TWO DEAD MEN SERVED UNDER ME IN 'NAM. HE'LL TRACE THEIR MOVEMENTS--
--AND ONE FINE DAY HE'LL ARRIVE WITH WARRANTS.
HE WON'T BE ABLE TO PROVE YOU FIRED THAT SUBMACHINE GUN LAST NIGHT--AND EVEN IF HE DOES, YOU DID IT TO SAVE BATMAN'S LIFE
THAT WILL NOT BE RELEVANT
SPEAKING OF THE MASKED MAN... IS HE READY FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF HIS... AH-- DEVELOPMENT?
HE'S SWALLOWED THE HOOK. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GIVE IT A LITTLE TUG AND REEL HIM IN
ANY TIME I WANT
ALFRED! ALFRED!
WHERE THE HELL IS THE BUTLER?
OH. I FORGOT--


HE'S NOT HERE
LEFT A NOTE
QUIT


NOBODY TO TALK TO, DAMMIT NEED SOMEBODY TO TALK TO.
MAYBE I CAN TALK TO THEM--

--THE BATS. THEY WON'T ANSWER ME--


--BUT THEY WILL LISTEN THAT'S ALL ALFRED WOULDVE DONE ANYWAY.
OKAY, LAST NIGHT. SOMEBODY YELLED JUST BEFORE THE SHOOTING. SAW HIM RECOGNIZED HIM

DOING TIME
AND
FIGHTING CRIME
EMERALD DAWN II
CONTINUING THE TALE OF
GREEN LANTERN'S ORIGIN
RE-UNITING THE CREATIVE
TEAM OF THE ORIGINAL SERIES
GIFFEN•JONES•BRIGHT•TANGHAL
SIX ISSUES
BEGINNING IN MARCH
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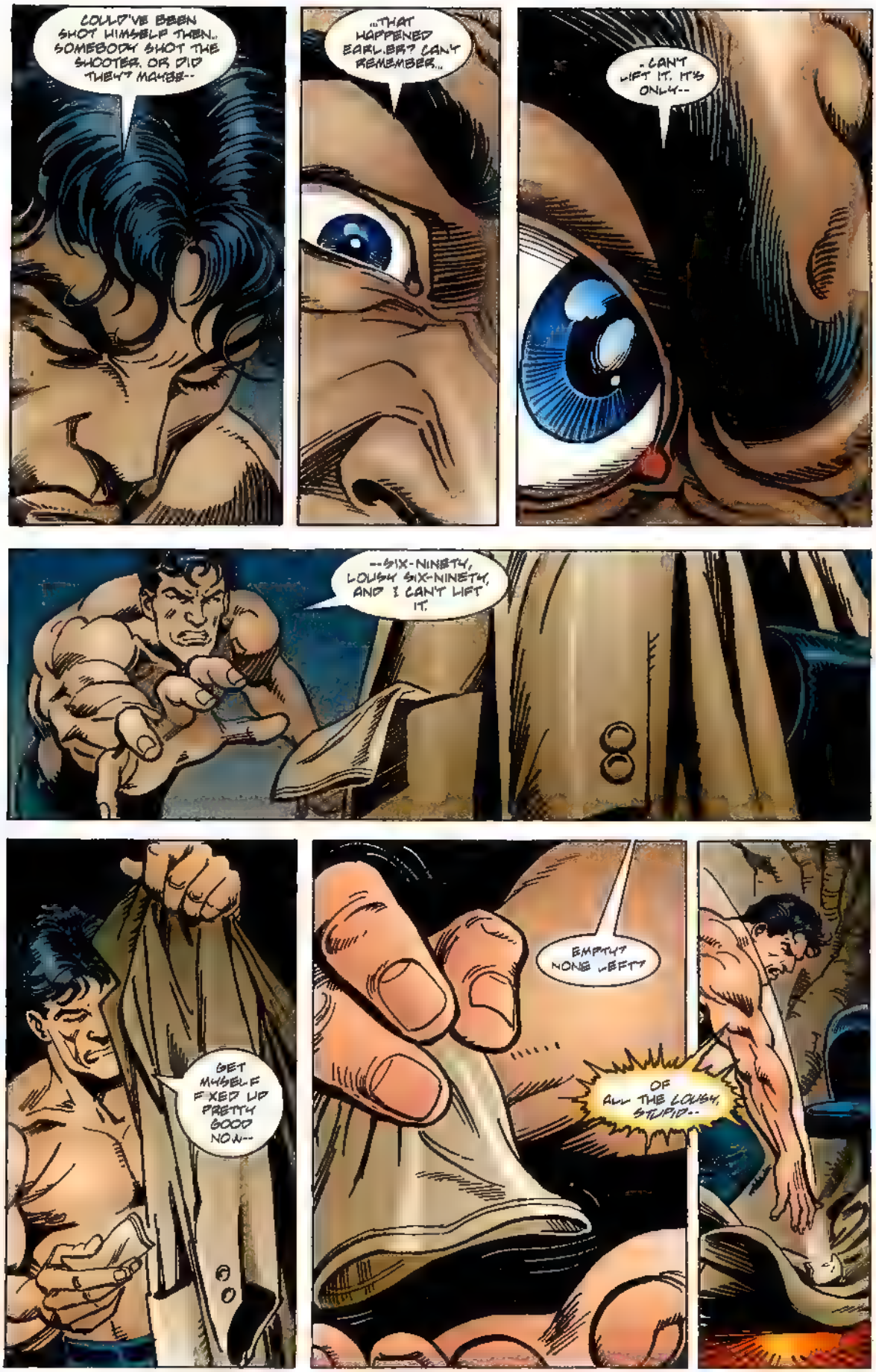
--THAT KID, THAT SLAYCROFT KID, TIMMY. HE YELLED HE SAID, "THEY'RE GONNA SHOOT." SOMETHING LIKE THAT
BUT WHAT WAS HE DOING THERE? WHERE'D HE GO? INTO--
--THAT CAR THAT DROVE OFF?
HE
SAVED
MY
LIFE


COULD'VE BEEN SHOT HIMSELF THEN.. SOMEBODY SHOT THE SHOOTER. OR, DID THEY? MAYBE--
..THAT HAPPENED EARL.BE? CAN'T REMEMBER...
..CAN'T LIFT IT. IT'S ONLY--
--SIX-NINETY, LOUSY SIX-NINETY, AND I CAN'T LIFT IT.
GET MYSELF FIXED UP PRETTY GOOD NOW--
EMPTY? NONE LEFT?
OF ALL THE LOUSY, STUPID--

PORTER. HIS FAULT SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ME MORE LIKE I ASKED. THINKS HE CAN GET AWAY WITH IT, DOES HE?
HE'S GOT ANOTHER THING COMING!
HE DOESN'T BOTHER TO KNOCK.
COME IN. WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
GIVE THEM TO ME.
GIVE WHAT TO YOU?
YOU KNOW.
--BUT I WANT YOU TO TELL ME
TIME FLIES
ARE YOU PREPARED TO EARN THEM?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN-- EARN THEM?

DOCTOR PORTER AND I ARE ENGAGED IN AN... ENTERPRISE. HIS INTEREST IS PURELY SCIENTIFIC--
WE'RE TRYING TO CREATE A GROUP OF SPECIAL HUMAN BEINGS. THE FIRST STEP IS THE PILLS YOU HAVE GROWN SO FOND OF.
--MINE IS PRACTICAL.
THE GENERAL HAS BEEN FUNDING MY RESEARCH--
--RESEARCH YOU HAVE BEEN PART OF, I MIGHT ADD
WHAT DOES SLAUGHOFF GET OUT OF IT?
A SMALL GROUP OF MEN WHO WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE FILTH THAT IS OVERWHELMING THE NATION...
...THE JUNKIES, THE CHEATS, THE SHIFTLESS INCOMPETENTS THAT ARE SUCKING US DRY
YOU KNOW WHO I MEAN?
SURELY YOU DON'T DISAGREE WITH THE GENERAL?
I... GUESS NOT
OF COURSE I DON'T
HIS HEART THUDS
HE IS HAVING TROUBLE CONCENTRATING

EXCELLENT. THEN YOU WON'T MIND HELPING US WITH A PROBLEM WE'VE RUN INTO.
SURE. I'LL HELP.
LOOK AT THIS PHOTO.
DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS?
IT'S JIM. THE COP. GORDON. LIEUTENANT OR CAPTAIN OR WHATEVER-HE-IS GORDON.
VERY GOOD. NOW, WHAT WE'D LIKE YOU TO DO SHOULD BE VERY SIMPLE, VERY EASY.
KILL HIM.
UNDERSTAND?
NO SWEAT.

Continued--

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT

DC COMICS INC.
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Dear Editor,

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #11 was the first issue of this magazine I've purchased and I only did so because of the creative team; however, I have to say I really like the concept of the book and I'll probably continue to buy it. If every story is as good as "Prey" looks to be, I'll be back every issue.

As for specifics of this issue, the art was superb. Paul Gulacy and Terry Austin meshed perfectly, and Steve Oliff's colors finished everything nicely. Doug Moench's story did exactly what a part one should do: it left me waiting for part two. I especially liked Dr. Strange, because he is a little more developed than the usual vigilante-hating analyst. I also like the reinforcement of the notion that Gordon is the only outsider who has any clue as to why Batman does what he does. All in all, an excellent issue.

Jeff Doar
Dallas, TX

* * * * *

Dear Good Guys,

It's great to see the team of Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy back on another brilliant Batman story. It's been too long since their collaboration on "The Dark Rider" story in BATMAN a few years ago. I must say Doug Moench definitely writes the best Batman vs. Hugo Strange stories around. I guess you could say "Prey" is the definitive Hugo Strange story, or is it the definitive Bat-mobile story?

Anyway, I'm anxiously waiting to see how Catwoman fits into all this. And what's this I see on the Night Scourge's costume? The yellow chest emblem?! Nice touch. Keep up the great work.

Melvin Yong
Singapore

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Dooley:

I've just read the first chapter of "Prey," and I want to congratulate Moench, Gulacy, and Austin on their wonderful work. I'm thrilled to see a new introduction to Hugo Strange, and the scenes where the mad psychiatrist cavorts around in his own version of The Batman's costume suggests an obsession that at least matches Bruce Wayne's. It's also good to see a deeper analysis of the relationship between Commissioner Gordon and The Batman. Gulacy and Austin offer beautiful work, paying homage to the style of "Year One" yet fleshing it out with greater detail, a fuller depiction of the characters, and a more fluid representation of motion. I'm looking forward to the rest of "Prey"—the first chapter promises a good time.

In LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #11, you ask us readers whether we think The Batman should appear in "mature readers" or non-Code approved titles, asking whether "price and harder-hitting content keep younger readers away." I realize that The Batman is probably DC's hottest character at the present time, but the suggestion that all his adventures should be suitable for younger readers denies the impact the character has in stories with stronger content. THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS and THE KILLING JOKE both appeared without approval by the Comics Code Authority, and I'm certain most critics would agree that these stories both contain some of the finest writing in Batman lore. Please resist any softening of LDK—DC offers two titles of Code-approved Batman stories, so LDK and special projects contain the only arenas presenting The Batman's deepest darkness. Give us stories that go beyond single-battle conflicts with villains in primary-colored costumes. Permit the tastes that guide the development of SANDMAN, HELLBLAZER, DOOM PATROL, ANIMAL MAN, and SWAMP THING to develop within LDK, and you'll have a loyal following. Perhaps a "mature readers" format would be the best way to go, so you'll be able to give your artists greater freedom in their creations.

Of course, if you're merely interested in pushing product, you could always do what the "other company" has done and release a fourth title featuring a major character involved in half-conceived adventures. You'll sell boxcar loads of the first few issues, and the frenzied speculators will make certain that the title becomes a household word—especially if issue one has five or six different formats.

Thomas Alan Holmes
Knoxville, TN

* * * * *

Dearest Doug, Paul, and Terry,

Thank you. Why? "Prey"!

It's everything I've hoped for! The reviews couldn't have prepared me for the incredible storyline or artwork. Nothing could have hinted at the depth of characterization or microcosm that makes up the Gotham of "Prey." Judging by the first issue, there is so much potential and so many directions to take that I am breathlessly awaiting #12.

And to the editors(s), let me say I am more than happy with the LEGENDS title and what's been done with it so far. Actually, delirious would be a more appropriate word.

Dean Corda
London, Ontario, Canada

P.S. Keep the Dark Knight dark, just like he's meant to be.

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Wow! LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #11 was *awesome!* This has to be the absolute *best* piece of work I've seen yet, and I've been collecting LEGENDS since #1. Honestly, even the cover art left me awestruck. My highest praise to Paul Gulacy and the rest of the team.

One thing, though: on page 8 I saw Bruce's hand all bloodied after he crushed the glass, and Alfred bandaging it on page 9. Next thing I see, Bruce is down in the Cave working on the car (the Batmobile?) without a bandage and his hand looks pretty normal to me. Did I miss something? Am I going crazy? Or was it a mistake on my part? (I know you guys don't make mistakes!) I mean, Bruce Wayne/ Batman is only human, after all.

Or is he?

Dana Solis
Jacksonville, FL

No, no cop-out mutant healing ability. There was a passing of time as Bruce worked on the car and you couldn't see the cut because, although it was deep and bled profusely, it was small. There is a darker line on the palm if you look close. Bruce found the bandage hindered his work and risked infection to get the work done.

* * * * *

Dear Kevin,

I had a crazy dream the other day. I dreamed that Doug Moench, the guy who wrote most of the best Batman stories I've ever read, the guy who introduced revisionist versions of Catman, Poison Ivy, Deadshot, and Calendar Man when nobody else would touch them and made them work, the guy who created Nocturna, Black Mask, and Film Freak, the guy who wrote "Resurrection Night," was back writing Batman again and everything was wonderful.

Then I woke up and went out and bought issue #11 of LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT. I think I've gone back into the dream again...

"Prey" is everything that a good Batman story should be. It includes excellent three-dimensional characters and a humanist plot. The Batman here isn't some lunatic right-wing thug (the way in which he has been portrayed, sadly, too many times in recent stories), but a man of honor and justness—in other words, just as Doug Moench's Batman always used to be in the mid '80s.

Dreams are funny things, but sometimes reality is better—as in this case. I thought Grant Morrison or, at a pinch, Alan Grant, would write the best Batman story of the year. I was wrong. Doug Moench has. Awesome!

Keith Topping
Newcastle Upon Tyne
England

* * * * *

COVER CREDITS: José Luis Garcia-Lopéz. Color by Steve Oliff.

NEXT ISSUE: You asked for it. Batman. A hero for the '90s. Dealing justice with a strong, merciless hand. Well, are you satisfied!? Damn you. It's killing him inside. Can he possibly win against his own hatred? It may kill him outside. "Venom" Part Three by Denny O'Neil, Trevor Von Eeden, Russell Braun, and José Luis Garcia-Lopéz.

—Kevin Dooley

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TWELVE DC ANNUALS, AND REACHES ITS SHOCKING CLIMAX IN ARMAGEDDON 2001 #2.

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